



**Office of the Attorney General
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NEWS RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL SUMMERS REACHES AGREEMENT WITH CHARITY
FUNDRAISER REGARDING SWEEPSTAKES CLAIMS**

Attorney General Paul G. Summers joined 18 other states in an agreement designed to stop misleading sweepstakes claims made in charity solicitations.

As part of the agreement, Newport Creative Communications will change its charity pitches and pay \$400,000 to the states. Tennessee's share is \$21,000 which includes costs of the investigation, consumer education and payment to the State's general fund.

"Using sweepstakes claims to solicit money from consumers is nothing new," said Attorney General Summers. "Any company making such claims, especially on behalf of a charity, must be forthright and honest with consumers. We believe that this agreement will ensure that Newport's future solicitations follow the rules."

Newport, a Massachusetts company, is a fundraising consultant for charities. Solicitations developed by Newport for some charities often contain sweepstakes promotions. Consumers complained Newport guaranteed prizes or claimed that recipients had already won a sweepstakes prize. The states also alleged in most cases, no prizes were ever awarded.

Some examples of the language used include the following: "YOU ARE OUR \$6,000 WINNER It's as simple as that," and "Cash payment to be confirmed for Mr. John Q. Sample upon reply by deadline." Newport challenges the states' assertion that these statements were deceptive and does not admit any wrongdoing in the agreement.

Newport has agreed it will no longer claim that the direct-mail recipient has already won a prize or that the recipient's response to the solicitation guarantees a prize. Newport will also stop creating mailings unless there is a prize ultimately awarded by the charity. The agreement also requires Newport to include inserts in its mailings explicitly stating that the consumer has not already won a prize, and that donating to the charity does not improve their chances for winning.

If consumers have information or a complaint about a charitable solicitation, please contact the Charitable Solicitations Division of the Office of Secretary of State at 1-800-861-7393, or consumers may file a complaint online at www.tennessee.gov/sos/charity.